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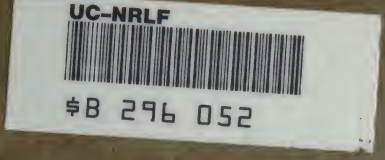

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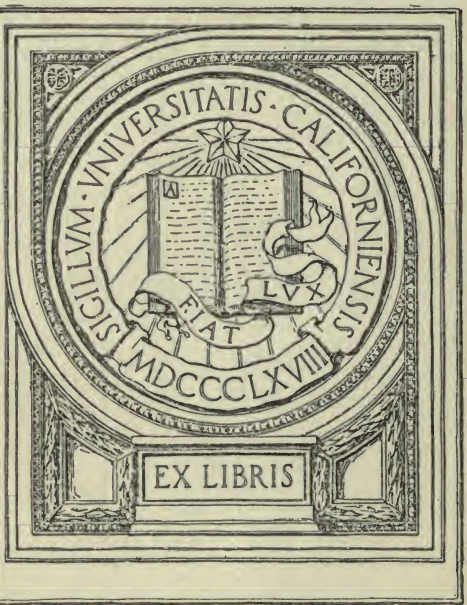

THE

MISSIONARY QUESTION

IN CHINA.

How to lessen the recurrence of Anti-Christian and Anti-foreign riots.

BY

C. T. Gardner, Esq. C. M. G.

H. B. M's Act. Consul General, Seoul, Corea.

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THE

MISSIONARY QUESTION IN CHINA.

RECENT events in China have caused the public in Europe and America to regard the Missionary Question just now with more than ordinary interest, and to ask what can be done to prevent the recurrence of anti-christian and anti-foreign riots endangering our commercial interests in China and our friendly relations with the Chinese Government.

It is the experience of everyone who has watched events in the far East that the Missionary Question has always given rise to difficulties, and it is the opinion of those most competent to judge that for many years to come the missionary question will give rise to difficulties. I think, however, that difficulties in the future may be sensibly decreased if we will dispassionately study facts and adopt the measures which facts in China and elsewhere shew to be feasible and beneficial.

To ask whether we have a right to force our opinions, as to religion, on a people that does not want them is futile.

To discuss whether the protection of our creed in a foreign country is in accordance with the latest development of International Law, may be an interesting subject for a debating society but is quite beside the point in practical politics.

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These two questions have been answered by immutable facts. Centuries of proselytizing, millions subscribed for missionary purposes, Treaties made between Christian and non-christian States, all attest that public opinion in Christendom has decided that missionary enterprize in non-christian countries is to be fostered and protected.

Prince Kung is reported to have asked, over 30 years ago, the British Minister to take away his Missionaries from China. It was impossible to concede the demand then, when the British Missionaries could be counted in tens and their converts in hundreds, it is still more impossible now when British Missionaries are countable in hundreds and their converts in myriads. At the present moment there are in China probably as many as two thousand European and American Missionaries and over a million native Christians.

The Governments of civilized countries would find greater difficulty in recalling their missionary subjects from non-christian lands than in recalling their merchant and artizan subjects from Christian lands.

The attempt to minimize the political danger, by insisting on British Missionaries residing at the Treaty Ports in China, within reach of our gunboats, has been made unsuccessfully. Minister after Minister of Foreign Affairs in Great Britain, our Representatives at Peking, our Consuls at the ports have done their utmost to discourage our countrymen and countrywomen settling in the interior in vain; the Spirit of enthusiasm, and the longing for the crown of martyrdom have burst through all bands of red tape and carried the male and female

. 1901. The numbers now
would to probably 10,000 +

Missionary to the remotest parts of the Empire. Our Statesmen, Diplomatists and Consuls cannot shirk the difficult task of protecting them in those remote parts, cannot avoid claiming reparation when British Missionaries are outraged in places where British officials would, if they could, have prevented the Missionaries residing.

The first fact we have to face is—*We cannot, even if we so desired, put a stop to, or even curtail, Missionary enterprize in China.*

The second fact we have to face is—*The vast Majority of the Chinese governing classes and people dislike Missionary enterprize and are only deterred from open acts of hostility by two factors—supiness and fear.*

We may foresee that the Chinese officials will in the future, as in the past, oppose missionary work secretly by every means that will not entail too much personal exertion or too disagreeable personal consequences. And that the people will in the future, as in the past, be liable to fits of fury against the missionaries and the native Christians which will have more or less fatal results.

The remedial steps obviously deducible from the above, namely, to render it difficult for the officials to indulge in their hostility secretly, and to make the consequences of overt acts of hostility very disagreeable to them personally, have always been taken by British officials in China, when outrages on British Missionaries have been traced to, or have not been discouraged by, the Chinese officials.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the action of the British officials has been without effect. Outrages on Missionaries and native Christians have by no means increased in proportion to the increase in the number of Missionaries, of native converts and of the points of friction; but something more is needed. How far can we go to the root of the matter and remove or mitigate the dislike of the non-christian Chinese?

The causes of this dislike are manifold—Patriotism, Religious superstition and Ignorance, Social customs, Pecuniary Interests. In some respects the dislike is not only natural it is justifiable. No action by governments or missionaries can remove all the causes of dislike of the non-christian Chinese towards Missionaries and Christians, but there are feasible means of reducing the virulence of this enmity. How can Christian Missions be conducted so as least to shock the patriotism, outrage the religious feelings, run counter to the social customs, adversely affect the pecuniary interests of the non-christian Chinese and so as most to allay the superstitions and remove the ignorance of the masses with regard to the Missionaries?

We must remember Christianity is in China a foreign religion. The new native convert holds to his church more than to his country and—what in the eyes of the people of China is still more heinous—to the congregation more than to his clan. The unique position taken by France as the protector of the Roman Catholic Church in China has made many of the Catholic Christians look with greater affection on France than on China. During the wars of 1859 and 1885 the Catholic Chinese undoubtedly rendered services to the French cause against their

own countrymen, and were suspected, by the non-christian, of all sorts of plots and treachery. The French protection of Catholicism in China has had most important and, from a Christian point of view, most beneficial effects, but to many it seems that now the disadvantages of that system outweigh the advantages. At the present moment the majority of Catholic Missionaries in China are not French subjects, the Italian and Spanish Government have now their own treaties with China and consider it derogatory to their dignity that their subjects should be protected in China by France. The Catholic Bishops in China now find their dependance on France a hindrance—rather than a help—in the prosecution of their work. All the non-French Missionaries and many of the French Missionaries would much prefer stating their grievances to representatives of the Holy See rather than to the representatives of France, who are not always in sympathy with missionary enterprize. The Chinese Government would naturally prefer to discuss the settlement of cases of alleged persecution of Christians with a Papal Legate than with the representative of France. As its yielding in the former case would have the appearance of a dignified concession to reason and would not lay it open, as yielding to the French minister does, to the native accusation of truckling to the Barbarians. At the same time, if Christianity were placed under the joint protection of Christendom, the representations of the Papal Legate would have more weight than the representations of the Minister of one Christian Power. The native Christians having an appeal to a spiritual Chief would no longer look to a foreign temporal power and would find it consistent with both their own temporal interests and with the interests of their church to evince love of country and patriotism for their nation.

These considerations were evident in 1886, and an attempt was then made to replace the protection in China of Catholicism by the protection of a Papal Legate. But the moment was ill chosen. The French war in China had ended in a manner with which Frenchmen were not quite satisfied, the French people were in a state of excitement and any measure which would have seemed to injure the prestige of France would have created exasperation. The giving up, at that moment, of the protection of Catholicism in China would have done more harm in France than good in China. The Holy See decided wisely and gave the Bishops in China the, to them, unwelcome order—"*nihil innovetur.*" But now five years have elapsed the question might be re-opened. Every concession should be made to French sentiment, and when placing Christianity in China under the joint protection of the Christian Powers, France should be given the position that her dignity requires and that her magnificent services to Christendom in the East, and the sacrifices she has recently made, render befitting. This might be done by making the French Minister, in China, the *ex officio* mandatory at Peking, of the Christian Powers in cases where matters affecting Christianity have to be represented to the Peking Government, and her Consuls *ex officio* chairmen of meetings of the consular body when convened for making representations connected with religion to the Chinese provincial authorities.

A second cause of the dislike of non-christian Chinese against Christianity is religious. It is commonly stated there are three state Religions in China—Confusianism, Buddhism, Tauism. This statement is misleading to a western reader. Con-

fucianism is, to our idea, a system of ethics and government, and not a religion. Buddhism and Tauism never replaced the ancient nature and ancestral worship of China, they only added to that worship certain legends and ceremonies. Nature and ancestral worship is the true religion of China. Nature worship has, to a great extent, been overshadowed by ancestral worship, the latter forms the basis of Chinese ethics and the pivot of Chinese social life.

"*Hsiao* "*Pietas*"—reverence for the progenitor—is not only the first of Chinese virtues, it is the foundation of them all. It is on ancestral worship that the Chinese Government is formed. It is by the requirements of ancestral worship that the succession to the throne is regulated. The supposed common ancestor's tomb occupies the central point in the family burial ground; however far a Chinaman may wander from home he desires his body to be buried near that of his ancestors. The ancestral temples answer the purpose at once of Churches, Clubs, Town Hall and Vestries. In them family quarrels are adjusted, division of family property are made, there is regulated the amount of labour to be expended on dykes and bridges, for the good of the community, there the family feasts are held. The committee of the family temple are the administrators of the property held in common by the family, it is the committee that decides on the help to be given to struggling scholars and to the widows and orphans of the clan. It is the performance of sacra to the ancestors more than blood descent which gives a man status in the clan and in the family. The adopted or arrogated son who performs the sacra succeeds to the personal estate of the defunct before the agnate relations, while cognate relations

have no right of succession (unless specially adopted) because they perform the sacra to the father's and not the mother's ancestry. The wife belongs to the clan of her husband because in the marriage ceremony she joins in the worship of her husband's ancestors. Every Chinamen desires male offspring in order that after death he may have some one to worship him and provide him with food and money in the next world. The burning paper money at the grave of a parent is the custom most universal in China; the performance of certain acts of worship to the Tablets of deceased ancestors, the religious rite that no non-christian Chinese neglects.

Every Missionary in China sees in ancestral worship the great bar to the adoption of Christianity in China, and it was at one time a question whether Missionaries should endeavour to destroy or to Christianize ancestral worship. The latter course would undoubtedly commend itself to the lay mind, but to expect theologians to modify, on the grounds of expediency, their opinions as to the question of idolatry is, as all history shows, a vain hope; besides on this matter *Bos locutus est.*

The Bull "*Unigenitus*"* decided the question as regards the Romish Church, and the Protestant Churches have come generally to the same conclusion. Christianity therefore opposes all that is dear and sacred to the non-christian Chinese—to the Chinese who think its teaching rightly seems subversive of all Chinese morality, of all Chinese social order, and of all Chinese family life; and as they know of no other morality, no other social order,

*Clement XI, A.D. 1715.

and no other family life, they oppose Christianity with more or less earnestness in proportion as they are more or less embued with high moral principles.

The alleviation of the dislikes of such men can only be gradually achieved by making them acquainted with the Christian ideal of morality, social order, and family life. *

The unthinking Chinamen, and they are in the vast majority, are little troubled by abstract principles, they, however, are needlessly exasperated by seeing, to them, uncouth foreign buildings shutting out views of familiar hills or streams, diverting, as they believe, the beneficent rain-bearing breezes from their fields—attracting noxious diseases and destructive locusts, and bringing upon the locality the mysterious displeasure of the local gods and spirits.

The instances where the foreign form of the buildings of missions have given rise to riots and acrimonious disputes—leaving behind them seeds of bitterness which may afterwards grow and bear a plentiful crop of enmity—are in China very numerous. The past, however, cannot be undone but similar troubles in the future can be avoided by a very simple expedient. In our Treaty with China no right is given to the British Missionary to reside in the interior. In the Treaty with America and France the right is only conceded under certain conditions. Where Treaties are silent China retains all her sovereign right; no Treaty has given up China's Sovereign right to declare what buildings shall or shall not be erected on her soil. She can, by right, demand that the privilege she gives foreigners of holding real estate in the interior shall not be made the occasion of disturbance, and she may

* This has been done with exhaustive success since 1894 by the Christian Literature Society which publishes in Chinese books on Christian Ethics Philosophy

reasonably make it a condition for the enjoyment of such privilege that the buildings erected on such real estate shall be in Chinese style. She has a precedent, foreigners may own vessels on the upper Yangtze, but such vessels must be of a native type—neither Christianity nor the Missionaries would lose by such a measure. The native buildings are far more suitable to the climate and far more in harmony with the scenery than our architecture. I have, on various occasions myself, had my teeth set on an edge by seeing a hideous *Bethesda* spoiling a bit of beautiful Chinese scenery. Chinese have but few social amusements. Almost all that I know of are connected with religion. Theatricals, displays of fireworks, etc., are generally given in honour of some god. Picnic parties and Feasts are held in some temples. It is at temples in the hills that the families of the well-to-do stay for a change of air. Processions, village and town decorations, the Feast of Lanterns, the Dragon boat festivals and all the social fun of the Chinese are banned by the Missionary as being idolatrous. Both Romanist and Protestant Missionaries endeavour to give their converts amusements to take the place of the heathen amusements foregone. The Romanist makes the church the centre of the old Chinese fun—gives processions, fireworks, feasts, etc., in honour of Christian Saints. The Protestant tries to replace the Chinese amusements by the foreign ones of Cricket, Base ball, and Tennis, but, however agreeable that may be for the Christians, it does not remove from them the odium of unsociability for not joining in the amusements of their non-christian co-villagers.

But the Christian not only refuses to join in these amusements, he refuses also to subscribe to

them, he refuses further to pay the customary fees, on the death of a father, to the ancestral temple, to subscribe towards the repairs of any temple, to ancestral feasts, etc.

A layman's view, that as these subscriptions are compulsory the subscriber is not responsible for the use to which the money is put, does not commend itself to the Missionary or to the convert; the refusal to subscribe to the rates, by native Christians, caused so many riots that, in 1883, an arrangement was come to between the French Minister and the Tsungle Yamen, whereby Chinese Catholics have only to pay 40 per cent. of the local rates. The idea being that he voluntarily subscribes to the Christian Church the 60 per cent of rates saved.

It is a remarkable fact that this arrangement which, to the lay mind, seems manifestly unjust to the non-christian Chinese, works harmoniously where the Christians are in sufficient number to support their own widows and orphans, and their own poor; but wherever new converts are made their refusal to subscribe to objects, alleged to be idolatrous, is sure to cause trouble and alleged persecution. It is no wonder that the non-christian Chinese should regard the conversion of a member of their clan or village to Christianity with dislike, as such conversion inflicts a pecuniary loss on the clan or the village community. It is therefore not astonishing that such conversions frequently give rise to alleged cases of persecution. One Roman Catholic Bishop went so far as to say there was never persecution except in the case of new converts. *Seminaire des Missions Etrangères, Paris, Lettre Commune*, No. 13, page 2, it is stated—"Si le missionaire se contentait de soigner les anciens

néophytes et renoncait à en faire de nouveaux en le laisserait tranquille."

I have, in conversation with Missionaries of all denominations and of all nationalities, endeavoured to point out that if the native convert be relieved from subscribing to objects in which idolatry forms a part, he ought, in equity, to give some *quid pro quo* in greater personal labour on the dykes and other communal work, or in larger subscriptions to objects not tainted with idolatry. I believe I have spoken, in this sense, to over a hundred Missionaries during the last seven years—I have only found two to agree with me! The rest maintain that the Christian's voluntary subscription to the Christian Church (from which the non-christian Chinese derive no benefit) is a sufficient offset to his non-subscription to objects tainted with idolatry to which the subscription of non-Christian Chinese is practically compulsory (from which non-subscription the non-christian Chinese suffer a pecuniary loss). Fortunately, in the vast majority of cases of dispute, the missionary's ideas are not carried out. There is in every Chinese village certain respectable people who act as peace makers—"reason talkers" as they are called—who effect a compromise between the Christians and non-christians; and it is only when the obstinacy or greed of one of the parties prevents the compromise being carried out that trouble ensues. I think if the decisions of the "reason talkers" were enforced by the authorities much trouble that now arises would be avoided.

Another cause of dislike is jealousy. The Christian education of the children of converts undoubtedly produces greater intelligence and a higher

moral tone than the Chinese non-christian education ; the consequence is that Christian Chinese are now obtaining a success in life, far greater than the non-christians of the same class. There is hardly a high official in the Empire who has not one or two Christians in his employ as confidential servants. These Christians are equally successful in obtaining clerical and other employ in Government and Commercial offices, such as the Imperial Maritime Customs, Mining and Public Works, the China Merchants Steam Navigation Co., etc. This cause of dislike can only be diminished by improving the education of non-christian Chinese. The attempt to do this has been made by many patriotic Chinese, among whom I would mention, with due honour, His Excellency Lui Lin, late Viceroy of Kwang-tung and Kwangsi who found leisure amid his ceaseless official work, not only to study the system of education advocated by Herr Hubrig, a German Missionary, and to found many schools in Kwang-tung, but also himself to write in easy rhyme a primer of moral instruction, admirably suited to little children. I would also mention, with honour, His Excellency Chang Chih Tung, Viceroy of Hupei and Hunan, whose mind is full of patriotic schemes to benefit his country, who is now vigorously endeavouring to introduce technical education and improve the moral education in this and the adjoining province.

The last and not least cause of dislike of the non-christian Chinese is ignorance and superstition. Their minds being prejudiced by Patriotism, by a partiality towards their own religion, by fondness for their old social customs, by jealousy and by pecuniary motives, are ready to believe the most

calumnious statements against missionaries.

The universal belief in magic makes them attribute the practice of the black art to Christian missionaries. The fact that their pharmacopœas prescribe certain parts of the human body to compound drugs, makes them ascribe the most horrible motives to actions and customs, to our minds the most simple.

Thus the fact that Europeans build houses with air spaces under the floors, instead of, as in China, filling up such spaces with earth, gives rise to a wide spread belief that all kinds of obscenities and horrors are transacted in the underground cellars.

The fact that the agents of the "*Sainte Enfance*" baptize dying children and close their eyes when they die, gives rise to the idea that the missionaries scoop out the eyes of the children to make drugs.

The fact that great mortality prevails in the foundling hospitals,—a fact attributable to the circumstance that healthy children are never deserted, as the girls are worth money when they grow up, and that fathers with baby boys are always ready to receive baby girls to rear as wives for them and thus save the expense of buying girls of nubile age—and that the girls received are sickly and diseased, gives rise to the idea that they are received in order to cut out their hearts and other parts to be used, in modes indicated by native works, on medicine.

The fact that the girls, when they arrive at a nubile age, are married to Christians in the country gives rise to the belief that they are sold in

foreign countries. It being quite legal in China to rear girls to sell as concubines, and a common practice, though illegal, to rear girls to sell as prostitutes.

This ignorance and superstition could in great measure be dispelled if the missionary Hospitals, schools, and orphanages were, as far as possible, built in Chinese style; if the missionaries would publish statistics of the death rates in the orphanages; if all unnecessary secresy were avoided, and if the Chinese authorities would insist on inspecting all the institutions in which Chinese subjects are reared, educated and medically treated—and publish the results.

I think also the Chinese authorities would look with favour on colonies of Christians being established in the sparsely populated parts of the Empire, and would encourage the emigration, to such spots, of the girls brought up in Christian orphanages and schools, but the emigration should be as public as possible—lists should be made out, of the emigrants, to be sent to the authorities of their destination. Such colonization, without the concurrence of the authorities, has been tried, on a small scale, in Manchuria with, I believe, marked success. One largish town in Manchuria is almost entirely composed of Christians, and little Christian colonies are dotted about the banks of the Sungaree and Wulan rivers. I have visited one of the educational farms of the Belgian missionaries in Manchuria with which I was much pleased.

Some of the Christian communities in South West Hunan are living, in peace, a life of primitive simplicity and purity, under the guidance of a

German priest, once one of the gayest of young German cavalry officers. The churches and Mission Houses are entirely Chinese. The priest has gained the respect of all the natives for many miles round. Christians and non-christians alike look upon him as the "reason talker" or peacemaker of the district.

In conclusion of this paper I recapitulate what, in my opinion, are the measures that should and can be taken to lessen the recurrence of anti-christian and anti-foreign riots, and to decrease the danger caused by Missionary enterprize to our commercial and friendly relations with China.

1. The substitution of the Protection of Christianity in China by the joint Christian Powers for the Protection of Catholicism by France.

2. The use, in new fields of Christian enterprize, of native buildings as churches and Mission premises.

3. The formation of some system of arbitration to decide what, if any, equivalent the Christian Chinese should give, in lieu of the subscriptions, to purposes tainted with idolatry.

4. The formation of a system of inspection, by the Chinese authorities, of all orphanages, schools and Hospitals where Chinese subjects are reared, educated, and medically healed.

5. The establishment of Christian colonies, with due publicity, in the scantily populated portions of the Chinese Empire.

Seoul, Aug. 18th, 1894.

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